

The Honorable Michael K. Powell
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Powell:

As a customer of DIRECTV, I am writing to urge you to support the pending merger of EchoStar and HUGHES, the parent company of DIRECTV. I believe the merger will increase video and broadband choices for consumers like me. I firmly believe that the cost burden of cable and telephone wiring in any community makes cable and local telephone broadband a thing of the past. It is vitally important that the United States take this first step to bring the technology that the Hughes-Echostar merger promise into the mainstream of our nation.

The fact of leveling the competitive playing field is huge to me. The cable provider in our community (5,000 households) is Charter Communications. Their service and commitment to improve service has historically be disastrous. A part of this comes from the cost of providing their service as mentioned above. We switched to DirectTV to get away from Charter and are glad we did. However we have no logical or reasonable way to obtain local stations. For the record it is not reasonable for us to purchase and place on our roof antennae or to have to pay cable another 10.00 a month for local 'lifeline' service.

The combination of Echostar and Hughes will be a much stronger competitor to cable operators by being able to offer me local TV channels via satellite in my market area, which I currently do not receive.

I currently have broadband access to the Internet available through SBC Communications but due to the fact that I really have no need for this service I have no desire for that service at this time. However, for those that do the combination of EchoStar and HUGHES will result in increased competition in the broadband market by providing an affordable high-speed Internet service nationwide via satellite.

I appreciate your consideration of my views.

Sincerely,

Thomas L. Harris
821 Center St.
Fulton, MO 65251